

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 161542Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 273

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6815

FOR EUR/SOV

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: CVIS, UR, US, PFOR

SUBJ: VISA RECIPROCITY: EXIT AND REENTRY OF DIPLOMATS AT BREST

REFS: A. MOSCOW 13767 OF SEPT 10, 1974 (NOTAL)

B. MOSCOW OM OF SEPT 10, 1974 TO SCA/VO CC EUR/SOV
(NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. UNDER RECENT CHANGE IN MFA PRACTICE, EMBASSY PERSONNEL DESIRING TO BOTH EXIT AND REENTER USSR AT BREST CAN NO LONGER OBTAIN VISA ENDORSEMENT FOR REENTRY AT BREST BEFORE LEAVING MOSCOW. CHANGE IN PRACTICE, WHICH WAS IMPOSED WITHOUT PRIOR WARNING OR CONSULTATION, WILL INCONVENIENCE AFFECTED TRAVELLERS FROM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW, AND WILL IMPOSE BURDEN ON AMEMBASSY WARSAW. THIS CABLE EXPLAINS PROBLEM; EMBASSY RECOMMENDATIONS WILL FOLLOW SEPTEL. END SUMMARY.

2. BACKGROUND. WITH INAUGURATION OF AEROFLOT SERVICE TO DULLES IN SPRING, 1974, EMBASSY AND MFA REACHED TWO AGREEMENTS ON RECIPROCAL ISSUANCE OF VISAS WITH ALTERNATIVE PORTS OF ENTRY (AND, FROM USSR, EXIT) FOR AIRCRAFT CREWMEN
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AND CERTAIN DIPLOMATS. AGREEMENT FOR DIPLOMATS (REF A

AND PREVIOUS) SPECIFIES THAT US ROUTINELY GRANTS NEW YORK-DULLES AND ROUSES POINT ON SUCH VISAS, WHILE SOVIETS ROUTINELY GRANT MOSCOW, LENINGRAD AND VYBORG. IT WAS AGREED ORALLY THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD CONTINUE, AS IN PAST, TO MAKE SPECIAL REQUESTS FOR OTHER PORTS WHEN NEEDED.

3. UNTIL RECENTLY SYSTEM WORKED WELL, AND NUMEROUS EMBASSY PERSONNEL REQUESTED AND RECEIVED EXIT AND REENTRY FOR SURFACE TRAVEL THROUGH BREST. WHILE EMBASSY HAD ANTICIPATED THAT IN SUCH CASES MFA WOULD SUBSTITUTE BREST FOR ONE OF THREE REGULAR PORTS ON MULTIPLE EXIT-AND-ENTRY VISAS OF AMEMBASSY PERSONNEL, MFA INSTEAD ENDORSED VISAS TO BE VALID FOR BREST FOR LIMITED TIME PERIOD IN ADDITION TO ORIGINAL THREE PORTS, THEREBY GRANTING IN FACT A FOUR-PORT VISA FOR THAT LIMITED PERIOD.

4. HOWEVER, IN MID-MAY 1975, MFA CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION WITHOUT CONSULTATION OR NOTIFICATION TO EMBASSY BEGAN ISSUING EXIT ONLY THROUGH BREST IN RESPONSE TO EMBASSY REQUESTS FOR EXIT AND REENTRY AT BREST. EMBASSY TRAVELLERS TO WARSAW WITH SUCH VISAS WILL THEREFORE BE COMPELLED, IF THEY WISH TO RETURN BY SURFACE ON THE SAME ROUTE, TO SUBMIT THEIR PASSPORTS TO AMEMBASSY WARSAW FOR SUBMISSION TO SOVEMBASSY WARSAW FOR ENDORSEMENT FOR RETURN THROUGH BREST. UPON RECEIPT OF FIRST SUCH LIMITED ENDORSEMENTS, CONSOFF POINTED OUT TO MFA CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION BY PHONE THAT (A) GRANT OF EXIT ONLY IS NOT RECIPROCAL TO US GRANTS OR EXCEPTION FROM USUAL THREE, AS US DOES NOT REQUIRE EXIT VISAS; AND (B) SUCH CHANGE FROM PAST MFA PRACTICE CREATES CONSIDERABLE INCONVENIENCE FOR TRAVELLER, AND BOTH AMERICAN AND SOVIET EMBASSIES IN WARSAW. BOTH ARGUMENTS, HOWEVER, WERE TO NO AVAIL.

5. DEMARCHE WITH MFA. MAY 16 CONSOFF CALLED AT MFA CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION TO DISCUSS PROBLEM WITH MINISTER-COUNSELOR L.N. FEDOTOV AND F.A. AGANIN. (LATTER, AN APPARENT HARDLINER, RECENTLY ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR PORT-OF-ENTRY-AND-EXIT ISSUE FROM MORE AMENABLE N.Y. KUSTOV, AND THAT STAFFING CHANGE MAY EXPLAIN IN LARGE PART DEVELOPMENT OF PRESENT PROBLEM.)

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6. CONSOFF FIRST COMPLAINED ABOUT RECENT MFA REFUSAL OF PERMISSION FOR EMBASSY WIFE TO EXIT BY TRAIN AT UNGENY IN COMPANY OF CORRESPONDENT'S WIFE WHO HAD BEEN GIVEN SUCH EXIT PERMISSION. MFA OFFICERS OFFERED NO RESPONSE. CONSOFF THEN COMPLAINED ABOUT DEPARTURE FROM PAST PRACTICE WITH REGARD TO BREST. FEDOTOV AND AGANIN REPLIED THAT US AND NOT USSR HAD INITIATED PRACTICE OF RESTRICTING PORTS, AND MFA HAS SUCH PROBLEMS ONLY WITH US; MFA IS ADHERING TO

RECENT AGREEMENT OF THREE-FOR-THREE, AND WHILE MFA IS PREPARED TO CONTINUE TO GRANT EXCEPTIONS TO USUAL THREE PORTS, EMBASSY WAS REQUESTING TOO MANY EXCEPTIONS FOR BREST. AGANIN CLAIMED EMBASSY REQUESTED EXIT AND REENTRY FOR 125 INDIVIDUALS THROUGH BREST IN PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. THEY ASKED HOW MANY SUCH EXCEPTIONS AMEMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT GRANTED TO SOVEMBASSY PERSONNEL RECENTLY. CONSOFF SAID HE DID NOT KNOW, BUT BOTH ARE RESPONSIVE TO SUCH REQUESTS; AMEMBASSY ENDORSED VISA OF AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN TO BE VALID FOR ENTRY AT SAN FRANCISCO AFTER VLADIVOSTOK MEETING; DEPARTMENT REGULARLY GRANTS VARIOUS PORTS TO SOVIET DIPLOMATS RETURNING FROM CANADA. CONSOFF NOTED THAT FOR OBVIOUS REASONS OF GEOGRAPHY, AMEMBASSY PERSONNEL WOULD USE MORE DIVERSE PORTS THAN SOVEMBASSY PERSONNEL. HOWEVER, UNDER AGREEMENT FOR PORTS FOR AIRCRAFT CREWMEN, AEROFLOT CREWS USE BOTH ALTERNATIVE PORTS JFK AND DULLES REGULARLY, WHILE PANAM CREWMEN VERY RARELY USE LENINGRAD.

7. CONSOFF NOTED THAT AGREEMENT ON THREE-FOR-THREE PORTS FOR DIPLOMATS WAS INTENDED TO BE RECIPROCAL LIBERALIZATION, AND NOT MAKE MATTERS MORE DIFFICULT AND COMPLICATED. HE SUGGESTED THAT ENTIRE QUESTION SEEMED UNCOMPLICATED HOUSE-KEEPING MATTER, AND ONE WHICH NEED NOT BE ADVERSARY ISSUE. CONSOFF SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT SOME MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT COULD BE WORKED OUT IF BOTH SIDES WISHED, AND ASKED FOR INDICATIONS OF SOVIET INTEREST IN RECIPROCAL AGREEMENT FOR FOUR MUTUALLY-ACCEPTABLE PORTS, OR FOR SUBSTITUTION OF BREST FOR LENINGRAD AS REGULAR THIRD PORT FOR AMEMBASSYBUT NOT AMCONGEN PERSONNEL. FEDOTOV AND AGANIN DECLINED TO GIVE ANY TENTATIVE REACTIONS AND INVITED CONSOFF TO SUBMIT ANY US PROPOSAL IN WRITING. CONSOFF ASKED THAT MFA CONTINUE PAST PRACTICE OF GRANTING BOTH EXIT AND REENTRY THROUGH BREST WHILE MATTER IS PURSUED, CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT MFA OFFICERS DECLINED. THEY INDICATED THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO ABIDE BY AGREEMENT FOR THREE-FOR-THREE AND WOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE EXCEPTIONS, BUT WOULD NO LONGER GRANT LARGE NUMBER OF SUCH EXCEPTIONS FOR EXIT AND RETURN THROUGH BREST. CONSOFF SAID HE OBJECTED TO HAVING TO ENDEAVOR TO SOLVE PROBLEM UNDER PRESSURE OF IMMINENT DEPARTURE OF NUMEROUS EMBASSY TRAVELLERS WHO WOULD BE GREATLY INCONVENIENCED BY CHANGE IN MFA PRACTICE. CONSOFF SAID HE WOULD REPORT MFA'S ACTION AND ATTITUDE TO DEPARTMENT.

3. EMBASSY'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WILL FOLLOW BY SEPTTEL.
STOESSEL

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